

California Forest Improvement Program Strategic Plan 2019-2024



Newly planted ponderosa pine in the southern Sierra. Photo- Z. Katay.



CAL FIRE's Mission

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection serves and safeguards the people and protects the property and resources of California.

California Forest Improvement Program Vision

Ensure nonindustrial forestland owners receive financial and technical assistance to sustain productive forest management actions that support resilient forest lands across all forest types in the State of California.

Approved By:

Thomas W. Porter
Director

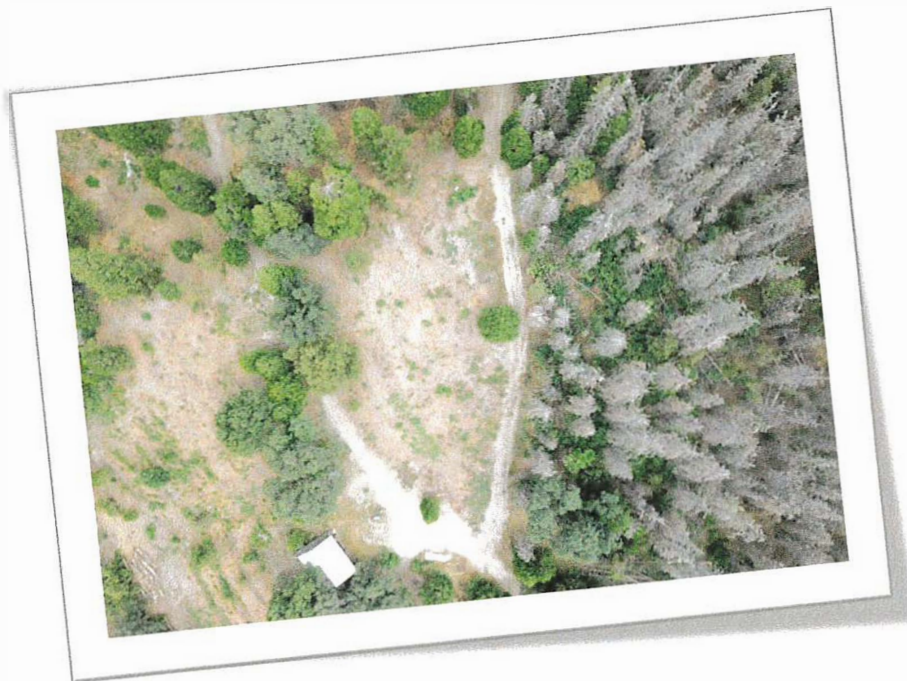
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Executive Summary

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CAL FIRE's) California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) provides an important resource to nonindustrial forestland owners. California's forests are facing serious challenges due to climate change and the increased severity of pest and wildfire events. The CFIP is a successful, existing Program for the Department that provides financial and technical assistance to nonindustrial landowners throughout the State. It is important for the Program to maximize benefits to the public, run efficiently, and make effective and quantifiable progress to improve the management and health of nonindustrial forestland.

The Strategic Plan is intended to span a five-year period and will provide important direction to CAL FIRE Forestry Assistance Specialist (FAS) staff. The plan includes three major goals: 1) Maximize the benefits the public receives from the CFIP, 2) Improve and streamline Program administration, and 3) Improve the management and health of forestland owned by nonindustrial landowners. Each of the three goals includes strategies and actions to successfully achieve the goals. The Strategic Plan is focused on achievable action items.

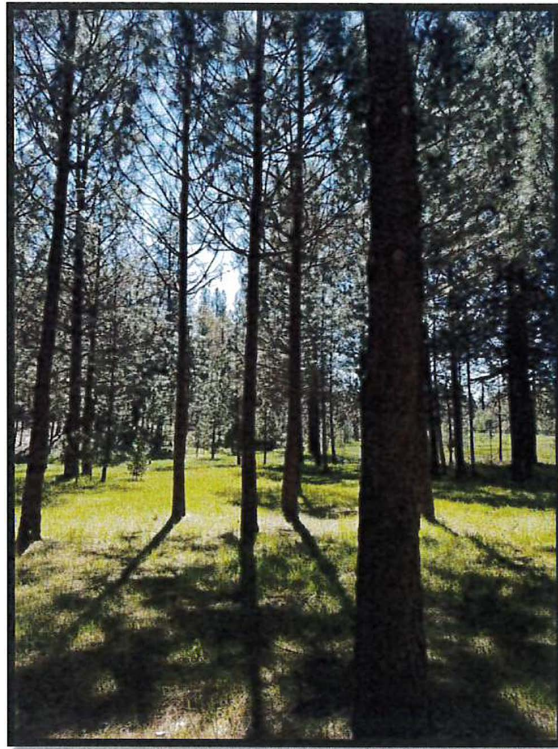
The Strategic Plan seeks to lay the foundation that supports the sustainability of the Program. Sustainability of the Program is reliant on secure funding and efficient delivery of Program efforts. The Program has suffered from inconsistent funding in the past, which must be stabilized. The Program must also move forward using new technology to make program administration more efficient. Finally, to make continued positive changes in improving nonindustrial forestland, collaborative efforts must be made using the best available science and a flexible but targeted funding process.



Aerial view of CFIP site preparation project. Ready for replanting. Photo- M Brown

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15-year old ponderosa pine stand following CF/P thinning and pruning practices. Photo- Z. Katay.

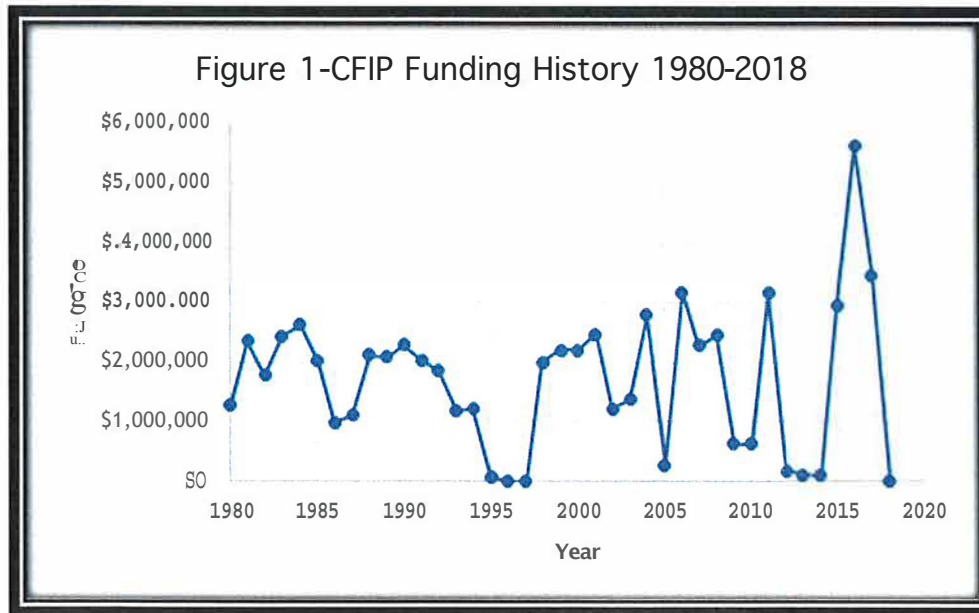
Introduction

The California Forest Improvement Act of 1978 was established by the California Legislature to provide funding for forest resource improvement activities. It also directed the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to develop regulations, guidelines, and publications to be submitted and reviewed by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF), thereby allowing the BOF some review of Program operations (PRC 4799.02). Together, these statutes and regulations established the California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP).

The source of funding for CFIP projects historically came from California's Forest Resource Improvement Fund (FRIF), which receives its funding from timber sale revenue from the State's Demonstration Forests. The FRIF funding no longer provides funding for CFIP. During the last several years, funding has been provided from other State sources such as the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) and the Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund (TRFRF). Funding has also been provided from other State and federal sources, such as the Forest Stewardship Program, High Speed Rail Authority, and the Forest Health Program.

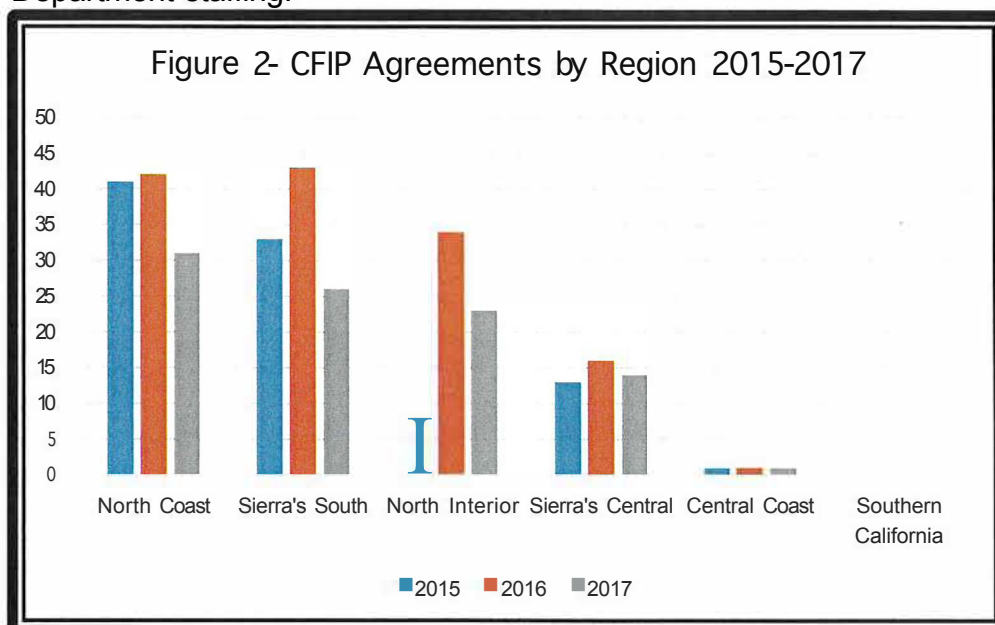
Funding levels have been inconsistent through the years (Figure 1). The FRIF funding has been inconsistent due to varying levels of harvest on the State forests and a lawsuit in 2001 that altered access to FRIF for CFIP funding. Another variable has been funding from federal partners such as the U.S. Forest Service. Average funding has been

approximately \$1.7 million per year, ranging from no funding in some years to a peak of \$5.6 million in fiscal year 2016. A pulse of funding came from Prop 40 starting in 2002 and ending in 2011. The recent surge in funding has allowed the Department to hire permanent staff and provide a higher level of forestry assistance services to the public. Since fiscal years 2015-2017, the Department has fully encumbered all available funding by entering into 327 cost share agreements, totaling just over \$12 million. Unfortunately, no further funding was appropriated to the Program in fiscal year 2018.



Funding by regions for fiscal years 2015-2017 is shown in Figure 2. Regions include the North Coast, Central Coast, North Interior, Central Sierra, Southern Sierra, and Southern

California. Program demand has been highest on the North Coast, which corresponds to a large timber industry, and the Southern Sierras, where there has been unprecedented tree mortality. Some areas of California, such as Southern California and the Central Coast, have not taken advantage of the Program due to limited availability of local consulting Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs) and limited Department staffing.

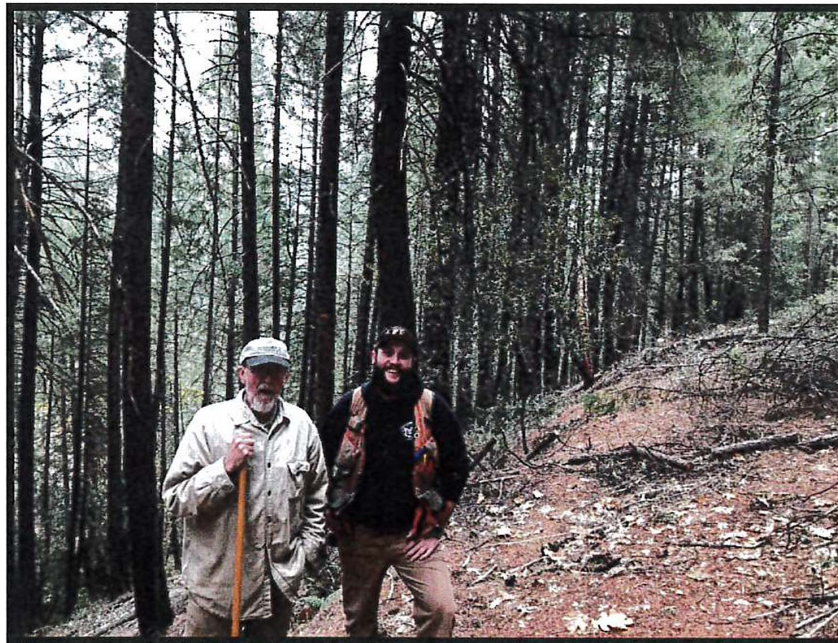


Goals and Strategies

The Forestry Assistance Program Strategic Plan is organized by goals, strategies, and actions. Goals are brief, clear statements of an outcome that will be reached within the 5-year timeframe. A goal is a broad, descriptive, yet tangible statement. Strategic points move the Program forward towards a goal, and the actions are steps that are taken to support the strategy. Action items have been organized by achievable timelines as indicated by the year in parenthesis after each action (1-year, 2-year, etc.). Actions are prioritized not only by importance, but also whether they are achievable with current Department staffing. Some actions are shown as ongoing because action has already been taken, but must continue to progress towards the identified strategy and resulting goal.

Goal # 1: **Maximize the benefits the public receives from the CFIP**

The purpose of the CFIR is to encourage private and public investment in, and improved management of, California forest lands and resources. This focus is to ensure adequate high quality timber supplies, related employment and other economic benefits, and the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of a productive and stable forest resource system for the benefit of present and future generations. The continued success of the Program in delivering the necessary resources to the small nonindustrial landowners of California is dependent upon the use of information and education programs, ensuring the Program is adequately funded, determining if current allowable practices/policies are appropriate, and ensuring projects are completed.



Landowners rely on the work of RPFs to achieve their management goals. Photo- S. McMorrow

Strategy 1.1- Increase communication, education and awareness about the Program to the public.

The success of a program that delivers financial resources to forest landowners is dependent upon the awareness of opportunities, establishment of clear communication, and delivery of accurate information. The CFIP serves a large and diverse array of forest types across a wide range of communities. Examples of project participants who need to be made increasingly aware of the Program include landowners, RPFs, resource conservation districts, State agency employees, and other natural resource managers. With funding and policy changes from year to year, information needs to be consistently and easily accessible. Internal forestry assistance employees need to engage with Unit and Regional staff to regularly educate participants on CFIP-specific processes and policies to avoid potential administrative issues. Increasing communication between other CAL FIRE resource management programs will also encourage cooperation between the various programs. The following actions have been identified:

- Increase collaboration between State, federal, and local agencies (ongoing).
- Continue monthly conference calls and publish conference call minutes in a library accessible to all Regional and Unit FAS. Send out monthly call notes to Region and Unit resource management leadership (ongoing).
- Develop a single electronic mailing list (including CFIP participants, RPF's, etc.) for disseminating information/updates outside of the Department using a listserv subscription service (1-year).
- Develop a feedback mechanism for the public to submit questions and/or comments where the responses can be made public (1-year).
- Establish a social media presence to bring CFIP communications to a wider audience. This provides an opportunity to share news and updates, share resources, and highlight success stories. The Program will add links to the Department's website and outreach fliers (1-year).
- Promote CFIP and landowner success stories in the Forestland Steward Newsletter and through the CAL FIRE Communications Unit (1-year).
- Develop a webinar platform availability for training sessions (2-year).
- Develop annual training or workshop series targeted at specific regions in the State with a standardized curriculum that can be replicated by all FAS staff (2-year).

- Coordinate with the CAL FIRE Communications Unit to produce video(s) discussing CFIP, benefits of the Program, eligibility, and the application process. Work to film on location, highlighting benefit of CFIP work on a project site in conjunction with other fuel reduction projects (5-year).

Strategy 1.2- Integrate CFIP With Broader Forest Health and Fire Prevention Programs

After the tragic and disastrous wildfires in 2017, the California Legislature passed several landmark bills in 2018; Senate Bills 856, 901 and 1260 to name a few, that provided direction and funding to advance forest health and fire prevention through fuels reduction, forest management and forestry assistance. Their goals, to a great degree, match those of the CFIP. The following actions will leverage the CFIP to integrate with these legislative initiatives:

- Integrate the CFIP with the California Climate Initiative (CCI) Program and the Wildfire Resilience Program in Senate Bill 901, to provide technical assistance to nonindustrial timberland owners. Leverage GGRF funding for the CFIP to levels commensurate with the \$200 million annually provided for the CCI Program by the legislature (ongoing).
- CAL FIRE will create the Wildfire Resilience Program and integrate it into the existing CFIP. The purpose of the Program is to assist nonindustrial timberland owners with wildfire resilience efforts by providing technical assistance on multiple topics, such as helping navigate the permitting process, fuels reduction, fuel breaks, forest health, and reforestation, for purposes of reducing wildlife risks while maintaining or enhancing habitat, watershed values, and carbon sequestration. This technical assistance will be provided by Departmental staff and in collaboration with other entities, such as resource conservation districts and the University of California Cooperative Extension (ongoing).
- CAL FIRE may use any mechanisms or tools to determine priority areas, including high or very high fire threat zones as described by the CAL FIRE's Fire Hazard Severity Zone map, in a Public Utilities Commission-designated Tier 2 or Tier 3 High Fire Threat District, or in the State Responsibility Areas where wildfire resilience activities are necessary and serve an important purpose. Where appropriate, the Department and its collaborators may conduct outreach efforts to nonindustrial timberland owners in priority areas to provide information and technical assistance (ongoing).
- To provide technical assistance, CAL FIRE may use its FAS staff or any other personnel with the knowledge to inform nonindustrial timberland owners of the options to make their timberlands more resilient to wildfire and provide targeted outreach on the above topics to nonindustrial timberland owners (ongoing).

- CAL FIRE will assist nonindustrial timberland owners by making all the following information available (ongoing):
 - (1) A list of permits needed from State entities to conduct various types of fuel removal projects.
 - (2) Concise information detailing research and current best practices for wildfire resilience.
 - (3) A list of the grant opportunities statewide which allow for wildfire resilience activities.
 - (4) The details of grants offered by the Department relating to wildfire resilience activities.
- CAL FIRE will provide technical assistance to nonindustrial timberland owners on how to maintain the benefits of fuel reduction projects (ongoing).

Strategy 1.3- Expand forestry assistance program funding and achieve a stable and secure funding source

The source of funds for the CFIP historically came from California's Forest Resource Improvement Fund (FRIF). The FRIF receives its funding from timber sale revenue from the State's Demonstration Forests. This historic funding source can no longer be relied upon to meet the needs of the Program as it has expanded over the years. Additional funding sources, such as the GGRF and the TRFRF, have been utilized to support the Program. However, these additional funding sources are inconsistent and cannot be relied upon solely to support the Program into the future. Therefore, to ensure that the Program is adequately funded by a secure funding source, and available resources are appropriately distributed, the following action items have been identified:

- Secure consistent funding sources beyond fiscal year 2019-2020. This would involve exploring other non-traditional funding sources that are compatible with the CFIP (ongoing). Possibilities include the GGRF, Proposition 68 funds, the TRFRF and other sources.
- Track the development of legislation to determine if funding opportunities are available or compatible with the Program (ongoing).
- Determine the level of funding that is sustainable by measuring demand and the ability of the current staff to deliver funds and support workload (1-year).
- Determine funding allocation by regions to determine where additional staffing and resources are needed to support the Program (1-year).
- Draft Budget Change Proposals for funding and staffing to support continued Program levels, meet the requirements of recent legislation for technical

assistance to nonindustrial landowners, and to implement the Program and meet its expanding mission (1-year).

- Directly participate in Governor's Forest Health Management Task Force to promote funding for forestry assistance programs (1-year).

Strategy 1.4- Expand allowable forestry practices available under CFIP

California forests are constantly evolving because of factors such as climate change, urban interface development, improper forest management or lack of forest management practices. The forestlands of California that were present during the inception of the Program have changed. Additionally, the tools and practices that have been utilized to maintain a healthy forest have also changed, expanded, and become more efficient. Therefore, the Program must evaluate the current allowable practices to determine if updates are required to create a more effective Program. The following action items were identified to help address this issue:

- Climate change brings with it massive uncertainty about future growing conditions and management situations. Species migration has already been observed. Support research and development of best management practices that will be relevant under as wide a range of plausible future climate situations as possible (ongoing).
- Identify new methods and practices that may be allowed under current Program authorities. Examples include biomass energy, biofuels and biochar technology to process smaller diameter trees and slash from fuel reduction projects (1-year).
- Oak trees and the environment around them are one of the State's most diverse and important habitats. Clearly outline how oak restoration can be accomplished using existing or new practices in the CFIP User's Guide (1-year).
- Identify new methods and practices that will need to be approved through updated Program statute or authorities (2-year).
- Develop an effectiveness monitoring Program. Monitor existing practices for effectiveness post-project completion by creating a follow-up inspection report for data gathering to evaluate if the practice accomplished the identified goals of the project (2-year).
- Research and data gathering on new and emerging technologies or practices. This could be accomplished by bringing together vendors, consultants, and landowners to provide information on new technologies and practices to make the Program more effective. It is recognized that the California Forest Management Task Force working groups are considering this issue and CFIP staff will collaborate with the Working Groups (5-year).

Strategy 1.5- Increase successful contract completion and expenditure of all contracted funds.

One of the most challenging aspects of the CFIP for both participants and project managers relates to funding allocations to landowners. This is primarily because CFIP contracts are not contractually binding on the part of the landowner insofar as requiring the landowner to execute the project work detailed in the contract. Therefore, the landowner can end up not spending any of their own funds on the CFIP while the State has encumbered and essentially "locked" those funds from any other expenditure. In other words, when a CFIP contract is signed by both the State and the landowner, there are two differing commitments being made in terms of funding. The State is making a commitment to have the encumbered funds available for reimbursement when the landowner chooses to spend their own funds first on the practices identified in the contract. When the landowner signs the agreement, they are agreeing to accept the identified practices at the agreed-upon cost share amount. However, the landowner is not under any contractual obligation to fulfill the terms of the contract, i.e. there is no contractual obligation on the part of the landowner to follow through with any of the project work. This means that the encumbered State funds are not expended and unavailable for reallocation. One challenge this imbalance creates is the inability of the State to re-encumber funds when landowners do not cancel their contract or simply do not act on their contract.

Another expenditure variable is project size. The CFIP has implemented contract dollar amounts and acreage limits while also funding large projects on a case-by-case basis. There are positive outcomes to imposing a large acreage limit on projects where larger acreages create a larger treatment footprint. The negative outcome occurs when those contracts are cancelled or landowners do not take any action, the State is with a large amount of funding it cannot re-distribute to other projects. The following action items were identified to help address this issue:

- Establish a monthly reporting of encumbrances and soon to expire contracts. Program managers and FAS staff can communicate with contracted participants to address non-operational contracts early to allow the Department to re-encumber unused funds (1-year).
- Establish maximum contract funding allowances for initial and repeat participants. This will allow first time project participants to receive a limited amount of initial funding, and upon successful completion, will allow amending in additional funding (1-year).
- Establish time frames/trigger points and provide standardized contact letters to landowners and RPFs. This will serve to inform them that action is needed on their contract. This will help to provide a clear understanding of expenditure and encumbrance time limits so landowners are aware of deadlines (1-year).
- Develop a funding-advance program as required by SB2551. This will allow landowners to receive a portion of the State's share of project costs up front,

which will further improve the chances that landowners will be able to contract and pay for their project (1-year).

- Develop a Progress Report signed by the RPF and landowner that reports progress or attempted progress as a means for Program managers to assess progress, but also for the landowner to offer a restatement of their commitment to follow through with their contract (1-year).
- Establish a list of regional forestry contractors so that RPFs and landowners have a larger pool of resources to timely complete projects (1-year).
- Seek to reappropriate funds resulting from expired contracts where the encumbrance date has passed through the budget process (1-year).

Goal #2: Improve and streamline Program administration

The second goal is to streamline and improve the delivery of CFIP through increased expediency. The CFIP relies on private forestland owners to initially fund the entirety of their project activities, then seek reimbursement from CAL FIRE upon approved completion of project work. When this reimbursement invoice process becomes onerous and time consuming, landowners tend to lose confidence in the Program and can have difficulty completing additional remaining treatments within their project area. Several strategies exist that the CFIP will implement in the immediate future which will serve to make both the application process more efficient and create a more simple and timely process for delivery of the reimbursement funds to the landowner. In addition, improved tracking of project metrics, as well as increased reliability methods will be employed to improve the mapping data collection of the Program. Often projects include several individual practices which need to be both individually tracked, as well as tracked as a total of the project's treated acres. Improving staff capacity and developing a more clear and succinct Program policy are also included as identified improvements. The following strategies are identified:

Strategy 2.1- Develop electronic filing of application documents and standardized project descriptions.

The CFIP will work with the Grants Management Unit (GMU) to develop and maintain an electronic application and invoicing Program. The GMU has taken the initial steps of contracting with an outside vendor for the development of a system that will be used for all grant Programs within CAL FIRE. Action items include:

- CFIP staff will aid landowners and contract RPF's in the establishment of project applications (ongoing).
- CFIP staff will work to develop the online grant application system so that it minimizes the paperwork involved in CFIP applications while storing participant

data for subsequent CFIP contracts. This system will include on-line submission of invoices and will include a tracking feature so participants will see the progress of their application or invoice in real time as its status is updated (1-year).

- CFIP staff will work with the GMU to ensure completeness of STD 204's to confirm efficient reimbursement requests. (1-year).¹
- CFIP staff will develop standard electronic project descriptions as guides to RPFs and landowners with enforceable standards and mitigation measures that will be automatically added to the project documents. This will also serve to reduce confusion and redundancy (1-year).

Strategy 2.2- Improve project tracking and use of CalMAPPER.

The CFIP recognizes the need for a statewide electronic database of projects accessible by all Regional and Unit staff. CAL FIRE's main tool for this purpose is the CAL FIRE Management Activity Project Planning and Event Reporter (CalMAPPER), which tracks the progress of various CAL FIRE programs including Fire Prevention, Vegetation Management Program, and CFIP. Since early 2017, CFIP has had a regular presence in the development and refinement of CalMAPPER. CFIP staff have been instructed to enter their data on an on-going basis and regularly attend the training sessions provided. However, there remain some needed improvements to the use and reporting functions of CalMAPPER. Action items include:

- Current CFIP projects shall be entered into CalMAPPER concurrently with the project's status of planned, active, or complete (ongoing).
- Historic CFIP projects shall be entered into CalMAPPER (two-years).
- All CFIP staff shall attend the annual CalMAPPER training (ongoing).
- CFIP management will establish clear time frames for completing data entry, which is consistent with the CalMAPPER Data Entry Guide for CFIP (1-year).
- CFIP will develop and implement periodic data reviews (a.k.a., data scrubbing) to ensure accurate and consistent data entry (ongoing).
- CFIP will work with the CalMAPPER Core Technical Committee to develop a CFIP-specific report through CalMAPPER, produced quarterly for executive and Program management staff (ongoing).
- CFIP will seek additional staff to consolidate CFIP data entry responsibilities. This will provide consistent data entry throughout the State (2-year).

¹The grants system does not have the ability to encrypt attachments. STD 204's with private landowner SSN's must be mailed.

Strategy 2.3- Increase Program delivery capacity

The CFIP has increased its staffing in the last few years as the increase in available funding has expanded, as well as the increase in resulting demand from the public seeking forestry assistance. Our current staffing includes foresters who generally serve the North Coast, Northern Interior, and Sierra Nevada mountains regions. We have a regional Forestry Assistance Specialist who serves the entire southern half of the State.

The CFIP staffing is reduced periodically while Program staff support the Department's mission by responding to wildfires and other emergencies, especially during the height of "fire season". Consequently, when CFIP staff are assigned to these emergencies, project invoicing and other CFIP needs are left unattended until staff can return to normal duties. CFIP staff also assists the Unit resource management Programs and have a consistent need to be current with developing trends and practices. Action items include:

- Encourage staff to be available to Units for resource management-related activities (ongoing).
- Expand continuing education of staff to promote greater expertise as a service forester and fire assignment availability (ongoing).
- Establish clear divisions of labor and authority for CFIP management, including the Stewardship Forester, Deputy Chief Forestry Assistance, and Region Forester II's (1-year).
- Evaluate additional forestry tools and/or computer Program needs so that all staff have adequate resources to address developing resource management trends and findings (1-year).
- Develop staffing who can serve the Central Coast region and additional staff to serve the Northern Interior and Northeastern regions of California's forestlands to a level commensurate with the requirements for technical assistance to nonindustrial landowners in recent legislation (2-year).
- Develop positions utilizing non-uniformed (non-safety) positions and/or retired annuitant(s) to ensure continuity of operations when large fire support duties drain uniformed staff availability (2-year).
- Develop and implement training materials to support delivery of CFIP Program by Unit or Region Foresters (2-year).

Strategy 2.4- Develop and refine Program policy and procedures manual

The CFIP has relied on the CFIP User's Guide as its main policy document for several years. This document was developed through years of policy decisions and the need to define how to handle issues and questions raised by project participants and foresters.

With the increase in project funding and staff, as well as changes in administrative policy, it is apparent that the User's Guide cannot solely be relied upon for capturing all Program policy. Development of procedures will greatly improve management of the Program. However, the CFIP has not updated its procedures manual for many years. Environmental regulation and policy compliance will continue to be maintained. It has been noted that compliance with archaeological procedures, the criteria of the priority ranking table, and our ability to earmark funds for specific regions needs to be clarified. Action items include:

- Update the CFIP User's Guide at least once a year to capture changes in legislation, policy and implementation processes (ongoing).
- Rewrite and update the 5000 Handbook policies and procedures (ongoing).
- Annually review 5000 Handbook policy for updates and communicate changes with staff (ongoing).
- Work with the Archaeology Program to ensure compliance with Archaeological Procedures (ongoing).
- Ensure that all staff maintain archaeological surveyor training certification (ongoing).
- Review current project ranking criteria and develop a priority ranking minimum eligibility score. Expand current ranking criteria to include emphasis on current fuel reduction and forest resiliency practices, such as fuel reduction, the project's community co-benefits, and carbon sequestration (1-year).
- Develop criteria for establishing regional funding priorities (1-year).
- Implement periodic project selection timelines (1-year).
- Communicate intermittent changes through expanded communications plan, which will include use of a listserv subscription service (1-year).
- Develop reforestation standards and procedures to achieve higher, more quantitative standards regarding practices involving reforestation project planning and implementation to achieve higher success rate (1-year).



Reforestation on private property. Photo- J. Butler

Goal #3: Improve management and health of forestland owned by nonindustrial landowners

The CFIP specifically targets small nonindustrial landowners that own between 20 and 5,000 acres. The original intent of the California Urban Forestry Act of 1978, which includes the CFIP, was to encourage reforestation due to inadequate stocking from timber harvesting, wildfires, land clearing, insect and disease outbreaks, and other

natural disasters (PRC 4790). Approximately 2,988,000 acres, or 18% of California's timberland ownership consists of nonindustrial timberland (CDFFP, 2017).

The frequency and severity of pest and wildfire events in the recent years has changed our view of forest health and productivity. According to the 2017 Forest and Rangeland Assessment, and using 2006-2015 forest inventory data (FIA), the total acres potentially in need of treatment, as of the final draft of this document, to improve stocking ranges from 5.5 to 9.5 million acres, which includes overstocked, understocked, and higher site hardwood-dominated timberlands statewide. Of these 5.5 to 9.5 million acres, nonindustrial timberlands account for between 913,000 and 1.48 million acres. The concern for understocked lands still exists to maximize productivity of nonindustrial forestland. However, it is now recognized that forests that are understocked could be improved to sequester more carbon. In addition, overstocked forests are a significant concern due to elevated fire and pest risk.

The need for forest improvement on nonindustrial forestland is substantial. However, CFIP funding alone cannot adequately fund the State's forest improvement needs as the CFIP funding does not have steady reliable funding authority. This lack of reliable funding has varied over the years, as shown in Figure 1. CFIP funding must be combined with other programs and funding sources to make significant improvements in management and health of forestland owned by nonindustrial landowners. In addition, the CFIP must promote best management practices (BMPs) and promote policies and practices that are most effective at improving management and health of nonindustrial forestland. The following strategies are identified:

Strategy 3.1- Collaborate with other CAL FIRE programs, outside agencies and organizations.

It is important that CFIP is coordinated with other projects being planned and undertaken by other programs to enhance project outcomes, cover larger areas with limited funding, and target critical forests. CFIP should also be involved in collaborative landscape-level projects that involve State and federal agencies, local communities, and other stakeholders. For example, in Figure 3, CAL FIRE has a Fire Prevention project as well as CFIP management units that are adjacent or overlap.



Figure 3- Potential collaboration between CAL FIRE CFIP and VMP in the Fresno Kings Unit showing the Cressman Fuel Break (light blue) and CFIP management plan units (dark blue).

There are other agencies providing assistance to private landowners, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), resource conservation districts (RCDs), non-profits, and fire safe councils. In addition, there are public agencies such as California State Parks, United States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Parks Service, Native American groups, counties, and cities that are actively managing forestland. There may be opportunities to plan CFIP projects adjacent to the other projects to share planning and contractor costs. Formal examples of this type of coordination already exist, such as the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program. Coordination within CAL FIRE, as well as outside the Department, is needed using the following actions:

- Establish and maintain contacts with other entities through email lists and/or phone lists (ongoing).
- Participate in local planning meetings with fire safe councils, watershed organizations, and landowner groups (ongoing).
- Coordinate with Vegetation Management Program (VMP) staff to determine whether CFIP practices, such as thinning, pruning and follow up slash reduction, can be used to pretreat an area prior to prescribed burning. In addition, CFIP practices could be implemented in sensitive areas such as riparian zones, near cultural sites, special habitats, or urban interface zones where mechanical treatments may be more appropriate than burning (ongoing).

- Identify adjacent nonindustrial forest owners that may be interested in pursuing similar activities to expand the size of the CAL FIRE project (ongoing).
- Determine whether the CFIP can be used to fund and develop a management plan, burn plan, wildlife survey, or archaeology survey prior to prescribed burning (1-year).
- Visit regularly with agency contacts to determine the details and status of planned projects (1-year).
- Work with other landowner assistant Programs to see if CFIP funding can be used to enhance a proposed project. For example, NRCS may be funding a shaded fuel break but does not have sufficient funding for the entire project (1-year).
- Communicate with Forest Practice staff to determine whether private landowners are proposing commercial fuel reduction or forest health projects. Adjacent small nonindustrial landowners may be able to work with the project proponent to enhance the size and scope of the planned project using CFIP funding (2-year).
- Use CalMAPPER to strategize where planned CAL FIRE and CFIP projects could be coordinated (2-year).
- Develop common language and messages for all programs. This would include describing how CFIP can coordinate with other programs (2-year).

Strategy 3.2- Promote practices and policies to improve health and resiliency of nonindustrial forestland

The value of CFIP is enhanced when practices are completed using the best science. Continuing education of CAL FIRE staff and the public is necessary to ensure success of the Program. Forest science is ever evolving. CAL FIRE must promote and require BMPs be used in CFIP projects. CAL FIRE must create CFIP project demonstration sites to illustrate expected standards, costs, and maintenance needs. CAL FIRE must also promote continuing education for its staff and the public. CAL FIRE staff must be on the leading edge of forest science to adequately administer the Program and produce successful projects. The public must be continually educated to promote the most current forest science. To accomplish these objectives, the following actions must be taken:

- Identify partnership opportunities for delivering the CFIP, such as Forest Landowners of California (FLOC), NRCS, University of California Cooperative Extension and others, and establish formal agreements, such as MOUs, to establish successful partnerships that will benefit private landowners.
- CFIP staff will participate as cadre members in conferences and workshops to promote forest management and health of forestland owned by small nonindustrial landowners. Examples include California Licensed Foresters

Association (CLFA), FLOC, Society of American Foresters (SAF), California Forest Pest Council, and American Tree Farm System (ongoing).

- CFIP staff shall provide local training programs for RPFs and landowners to highlight CFIP funding, application processes, and BMPs (ongoing).
- CFIP staff shall participate in leadership positions within the Governor's Forest Management Task Force. One of the main goals is to expand and improve forest management to enhance forest health (ongoing).
- Literature review must be completed for each CFIP practice to develop science-based fact sheets. Once the fact sheets are developed, CFIP will continually update as newer science becomes available (1-year).
- BMPs will be integrated into the CFIP User's Guide to encourage their use in project descriptions (1-year).
- Coordinate with CFIP participants to document regional success stories (1-year).
- Utilize the *Forestland Steward* newsletter to publish forest science articles and highlight CFIP success stories (1-year).
- Standardize project description templates similar to the NRCS Practice Standards that include specific practice objectives, site-specific criteria, and specifications (2-year).
- Every FAS should be trained to be an inspector for the American Tree Farm System. Inspectors work with small nonindustrial landowners to promote and enforce the American Forest Foundations (AFF) Standards of Sustainability for forest certification. The goal of the organization is to make a significant contribution to the health, productivity, and longevity of America's private woodlands. Inspectors will also provide landowners with most current forest science and can encourage participation in forestry assistance programs (3-year).
- Work with the CAL FIRE Demonstration State Forests to implement demonstration sites using the established BMPs. These could highlight practice specifications for different forest regions in the state (5-year).
- Work with Fire Prevention staff in each unit to highlight successful fuel reduction projects (5-year).
- Publish demonstration site success stories into fact sheets on the CFIP website (5-year).
- Lead public tours to the demonstration sites (5-year).
- Determine what additional staffing is needed to transition from a focus on grant administration to more technical assistance, education, advocacy, and outreach (5-year).

Strategy 3.3-Identify landowners and geographic areas to target available funding

The Program has an open enrollment period. All applications are reviewed for eligibility and ranked for funding. There is no legal authority to limit funding to specific landowners if they are qualified and provide a complete and accurate application. However, funding can be allocated by geographic areas and by project type to take advantage of immediate forest health concerns. The 2017 Forest and Rangeland Assessment concluded that current widespread tree mortality in the Sierra Nevada and recent large stand-replacing wildfires are a priority. The scope and scale of treatments needed at the landscape level to address these critical issues is significant and challenging. Action items include:

- Use CAL FIRE Pest Specialists to determine priority areas based on current pest issues and target locations to make the most effective use of available funding. Since landowners are not required to participate in the Program, education and outreach would be necessary to encourage participation (1-year).
- Evaluate the current ranking criteria required by 14 CCR §1533. This criterion was developed in 1978, and requires updating to take into account current forest management and health priorities. This regulation allows the Department to consider administrative constraints such as seasonal variations in applications and the availability of funds that might apply to different types of projects. However, some of the ranking criteria is obsolete and difficult to substantiate during the application process (1-year).
- Evaluate current FAS workload by region and determine where staffing is needed to efficiently deliver the Program to identified areas. Seasonal movement or temporary travel assignments may be needed to properly and effectively deliver the Program (1-year).
- Use the reports from Governor's Forest Management Task Force to prioritize funding to different treatment areas and treatment types (2-year).
- Use information from the 2017 Forest and Rangeland Assessment to prioritize treatment areas and treatment types (2-year).
- Identify large-scale planned projects on public lands and identify adjacent nonindustrial landowners with qualifying forestland to participate in CFIP. The impact of such adjacent, multi-ownership projects may be enhanced by sharing planning and contractor costs, as well as improving the forestlands within a larger geographic area (5-year).

Literature Cited

[CDFFP] California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Fire and Resource Assessment Program, 2017. California's Forests and Rangelands, 2107 Assessment, Sacramento, CA. <http://frap.fire.ca.gov/assessment2017>